

REMARKS

The Office Action dated January 27, 2005 rejected claims 1-4, 7-9, 11-18, 21-23, 25-32, 35-37, and 39-42. Applicants amend claim 15 and submit herewith formal drawing figures.

DRAWINGS

The Office requested that Applicants furnish formal drawing figures in response to the office action. Applicants submit formal drawing figures herewith. No substantive changes were made to the drawing figures.

REJECTION—35 U.S.C. § 112

The Office rejected claims 1-4, 7-9, 11-18, 21-23, 25-32, 35-37, and 39-42 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The Office stated that “The applicants fail to show how such multi-functional management tool is used to manage customer and product information.” Applicants respectfully disagree.

As noted in the background portion of the specification, customer service systems of the prior art relied on third parties to perform customer service functions. These third parties were in different locations, using different computing systems to track customers being serviced. In contrast, as shown in Figure 1, the present invention involves different entities at different locations accessing a server by using a network.

The claims state how such a tool is used to manage information: a first customer representative can access and modify a customer record, which contains information about the products associated with the customer and a second customer representative at a distant location can access and modify a product record. Such information can be used in a variety of different manners. For example, a information about a product purchased by the customer may be regularly updated by the second customer representative while the information about the customer may be updated by the first customer representative. Any time either the first or second customer representative wishes to access the tool of the present invention, he or she can do so secure in the knowledge that the information in the database is up to date. The result is a smoother experience for both the customer service representative and for the customer.

The specification provides several examples of how the tool is used to manage customer and product information. For example, Figure 5 (and the text describing Figure 5 starting at page 11, line 10) illustrates how the present invention is used to maintain customer records. Maintaining customer records is an integral part of managing customer information because it allows vendors and repair facilities to have accurate records of the location of their customers, which is necessary to send repaired or replacement parts to customers. Similarly, Figure 6 illustrates how the present invention can be used to manage merchandise that is returned; Figure 7 illustrates how e-mail to and from customers is handled by an embodiment of the present invention; Figure 8 illustrates how inventory is managed; and Figure 9 illustrates how reporting is handled.

Applicants thus assert that the application as filed does show how the multi-functional management tool of the present invention is used to manage customer and product information. Applicants respectfully request the removal of this rejection.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above amendment, Applicants believe all claims now pending in the present application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If there are any charges related to this response, the Examiner is hereby authorized to charge to White & Case Deposit Account 23-1703. Applicants thank the Examiner for carefully examining the present application. If a telephone conference would facilitate the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Thomas DelRosario at (650) 213-0300.

Respectfully submitted,

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By:



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